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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3866  
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RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 8319  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0696  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 2014  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 8906  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 001605

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STATE PASS USTR FOR AUSTR CUTLER  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/2016  
TAGS: PREL ETRD JA KN KS  
SUBJECT: JAPAN-ROK STRATEGIC DIALOGUE FOCUSES ON ROADMAP  
FOR DPRK DENUCLEARIZATION

REF: A. TOKYO 0547  
    1B. TOKYO 1150  
    1C. TOKYO 0164

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4 (B) (D)

1. (C) Summary. Tokyo and Seoul called for Six-Party Talks (6PT) participants to develop a roadmap for DPRK denuclearization during the June 5 Japan-ROK Strategic Dialogue discussions in Tokyo. Both sides agreed on the difficulty of persuading the DPRK to submit a complete declaration. The ROK argued that 6PT members must receive the DPRK declaration "even if the amount of plutonium is less than what we expected," but noted the need to verify North Korea's claims. According to Japanese Foreign Ministry officials, the South Korean delegation stated Seoul's wasted billion dollar investment in the light-water reactor project made resolution of the HEU question more important than the plutonium. Failure to address HEU in the declaration would leave Seoul's government open to strong domestic criticism. On bilateral issues, Tokyo and Seoul played down a recent textbook controversy and agreed to begin consultations on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on June 25 - talks designed to lead to full-fledged negotiations. End Summary.

12. (C) On June 10, MOFA Northeast Asia Division Deputy Director Shigetoshi Nagao briefed Embassy Tokyo on the Tenth Japan-ROK Strategic Dialogue, which took place on June 5 in Tokyo. Vice Minister Mitoji Yabunaka met ROK counterpart VFM Kwon Jong-rak for over six hours, including a 2.5-hour discussion and a 2-hour working dinner. According to Nagao, Japan and South Korea used the dialogue to follow up on the February and May 2008 summit meetings between Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and President Lee Myung-bak (Refs A, B). Former VFMs Shotaro Yachi and Cho Jung-pyo conducted the last dialogue on January 8 in Seoul (Ref C).

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North Korea  
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13. (S) Discussion on the North Korean nuclear issue occupied 2 hours of the 2.5-hour discussion and, according to Nagao

covered three topics: DPRK nuclear weapons, plutonium, and the highly enriched uranium (HEU) program.

-- Nuclear Weapons Program: Both sides agreed that, while the February and October 2007 Six-Party Talks (6PT) agreements obligated Pyongyang to declare and abandon its nuclear weapons program, it would be difficult to persuade the DPRK to include all details of its nuclear program in the declaration. Yabunaka and Kwon expressed the view that work should begin on a roadmap for denuclearization before the declaration would be issued.

-- Plutonium: Nagao observed that, while neither side discussed the issue very much, Japan noted that the amount of plutonium North Korea plans to declare is small. The Tokyo delegation claimed that the IAEA has questioned the completeness and correctness of the declaration that North Korea is prepared to submit. The ROK responded that the 6PT must receive the DPRK declaration "even if the amount of plutonium is less than what we expected," but noted the need to verify North Korea's claims.

-- HEU: As reported by Nagao, Kwon stated that the HEU problem is more serious than the plutonium issue because the ROK's more than one billion dollar investment in the light-water reactors had been wasted because of the HEU controversy. Failure to address HEU in the declaration would subject the Seoul government to strong domestic criticism.

¶4. (C) Yabunaka and Kwon concurred on the importance of the

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United States, Japan, and the ROK maintaining a united front toward the DPRK, which would seek to take advantage of any differences in the trilateral relationship.

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Bilateral Issues/EPA  
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¶5. (C) Yabunaka and Kwon discussed ways to conclude an agreement that would permit both countries to conduct maritime research in the disputed waters surrounding the Liancourt Rocks (called Takeshima in Japan and Dok-to in Korean). Tokyo and Seoul agreed to hold further consultations on the issue during the latter half of 2008, Nagao reported. Each side played down a recent textbook controversy raised by May 27 media reports noting that the Japanese Ministry of Education plans to issue an educational document claiming that the Liancourt Rocks are an "integral part of Japan." Nagao said the South Korean delegation conveyed "some concern" about the report, while Tokyo explained that no decision had been made. On economic issues, Tokyo and Seoul agreed to begin consultations on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on June 25 - talks Nagao said were designed to eventually lead to full-fledged negotiations.

SCHIEFFER